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ABSTRACT

Excessive, prolonged stress can alter the body's normal physiologic function. If adequate coping mechanisms are not instituted, this extreme state can lead to burnout. Burnout can be experienced with physical, intellectual, social, psycho-emotional, and spiritual adaptations. It has been estimated that up to 40 percent of U.S. teachers will not be teaching until retirement. If teachers are expected to continue teaching year after year with enthusiasm, then burnout prevention strategies must be implemented. Self-assessment, stress reduction, and proper diet, rest, and exercise are essential. The principal must take part in prevention efforts as well. Principals can give positive feedback, maintain high standards, encourage professional growth, promote support systems, and utilize parent and community involvement to assist in the prevention of teacher burnout. Teachers do not need to avoid stress but they must learn how to deal with it physically and psychologically to enjoy this challenging and rewarding profession. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/JLS)

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Teacher Burnout: Is it Real? Can We Prevent It? How?

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Abstract

Excessive, prolonged stress can alter the body's normal physiologic function. If adequate coping mechanisms are not instituted this extreme state can lead to burnout. Burnout can be experienced with physical, intellectual, social, psycho-emotional and spiritual adaptations. Alschuler estimates up to forty percent of the teachers in America will not be teaching until retirement (1980, p. 10). If one is to continue to teach year after year with enthusiasm, then burnout prevention strategies must be implemented. Self-assessment, stress reduction and proper diet, rest and exercise are essential. The principal must take part in prevention efforts as well. Principals can give positive feedback, maintain high standards, encourage professional growth, promote support systems and utilize parent and community involvement to assist in the prevention of teacher burnout. Teachers don't need to avoid stress but must learn how to deal with it physically and psychologically to enjoy this challenging and rewarding profession.

Introduction

Mrs. Smith had been teaching for over thirty years; she was a favorite among parents and students in the fifth grade. Through innovative techniques, Mrs. Smith inspired these eager learners to new heights year after year. With the announcement of her early retirement many were shocked and thought this seasoned veteran would stay on as everyone knew of her love for teaching and her fondness for children. Unfortunately, loving teaching and pupils is not enough. Insurmountable paperwork, endless and unnecessary disruptions and a multitude of meetings soon occupy much of the day. Mrs. Smith found teaching was more than just closing the door and attending the lessons at hand. According to Dworkin, teaching is a vulnerable occupation that is characterized by above average turnover rates (1987).

Sooner or later everyone experiences stress, to a lesser or greater degree. Like Mrs. Smith many assume that all stress is harmful. Jorde emphasizes teachers need to distinguish between stress which is good and productive and stress which is bad and destructive (1982). "Stress can be our stimulus toward achievement and success or our nemesis leading us ever closer to physical or mental illness" (Bradfield & Fones, 1985, p.91). In 1980 it was revealed by researchers that a certain level of stress is essential for effective functioning; when stress is excessive or prolonged it can become dysfunctional and dangerous (Alschuler, 1980). Jorde agrees and implies that as stress increases, so too does performance and productivity to a point.

Beyond a certain point, stress can impair performance, this prolonged pressure can result in burnout (1982).

Definition of Burnout

Freudenberger, a clinical psychologist coined the term burnout in the early 1970's. Freudenberger's use of the term was in reference to volunteers working with drug rehabilitation. Freudenberger believed this condition known as burnout occurred most frequently among the "dedicated and committed-those who worked too much, too long and too intensely" and that it was often a result of "excessively striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by one's self or the values of society" (Farber, 1991, p.6). Additionally, Farber emphasized an emotional exhaustion and worker detachment. Burnout can affect a variety of individuals from health care workers including teachers, athletes, early childhood educators and even students. However, it could be argued that burnout can occur at almost any age and that it can spread and become as contagious as the common cold at times. (Farber, 1991) defines burnout as

> a work-related syndrome that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output), this perception being influenced by individual, organizational, and social factors. It occurs most often in those who work fact to face with troubled or needy clients and is typically marked by withdrawal from and cynicism toward clients, emotional and physical exhaustion, and various

psychological symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, sadness and lowered self-esteem (1991, p.24).

Teacher Burnout

Numerous research studies have been conducted in an attempt to clarify specific teachers affected, as well as other variables such as their age, duration in the profession, grade level and school setting. God, et al. (1992) identify an Educators Survey, an instrument specifically designed to assess teacher burnout while other questionnaires have been implemented in an attempt to assess the level of one's stage of burnout. It appears that those who are most susceptible are teachers that don't react positively under stress and those that become disenchanted when their enthusiasm gets stifled in the system. Swick and Hanely (1980) elaborate on a teachers union in the Midwest that identified fifty percent of all teachers surveyed as having suffered physical or mental illness as a result of their job (1980). It has also been reported that it is not uncommon for child care centers to have a fifteen to thirty percent staff turnover rate as a result of teacher burnout (Jorde, 1982). A high teacher turnover rate was also noted from the 1950's through the 1970's with various causes for burnout and turnover sighted such as: low pay, problems with security, oversized classes, cultural diversity, political climate and lack of concern from parents, students and school administrators (Dworkin, 1987).

Contributing Factors: When Stress Becomes Too Much

The way in which people deal with a stressful situation has a significant influence on the way stress effects their behavior.

Stress occurs when individuals believe the demands from the environment are more than they can handle. Too much stress or the inability to cope with it, hinders the teachers desires to teach. The teachers ability to achieve a rewarding career ends prematurely as a result of burnout. Alschuler proclaims too much stress limits performance while too little stress takes away motivation (1980).

Jorde (1982) in her text "Avoiding Burnout" addresses three categories of causes that contributes to burnout they are: those inherent in the profession, intrînsic in the individual and those fundamental in our society and culture.

Inherent Causes in the Profession

Causes inherent in the profession include inadequate training leading to unrealistic expectations. Burnout can result from reality not meeting the novice instructor's extremely high expectations. Unrealistic expectations are created when student's needs, whether psychologically, emotionally or physically are not met as teachers some how feel they are to meet all of these needs.

A second cause for burnout inherent in the profession is unclear methods of evaluation for an individual's performance. Lack or absence of feedback and clear objective standards can be frustrating. Principals at all levels should have policies in place delineating each step. The role of the principal as supervisor is critical and should not lack clarity. Objectives should be documented and reviewed with routine evaluation and feedback sessions occurring. These steps should provide valuable

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information to both the principal and the teacher. This evaluation should provide the teacher with additional new ideas and techniques that can be implemented in the classroom.

Third, the demanding scope of the teacher's responsibilities is continuously expanding. Classroom management, preparation and instruction are all primary responsibilities. However, the teacher/pupil ratio can dramatically affect the effort behind these physical demands. On the other hand, teachers give emotionally as well, by consoling, nurturing and comforting when needed.

Jorde (1982) believes a fourth factor that might contribute to the burnout rate is the multifaceted nature of the teacher's role. This might include attending committees, meetings regarding curriculum, fund raising, new technology and program planning. Teachers are also expected to create pleasant and stimulating bulletin boards, meet with parents and attend conferences to develop professionally.

A fifth contributing cause inherent in the profession is insufficient salaries and benefits. Many teachers do not feel they get adequately reimbursed for the efforts they put in. A teacher's salary varies with experience, but in some areas of the United States, many teachers are still making less than $25,000 per year. Research studies have been conducted on faculty salaries with the greatest source of disappointment being identified in early childhood education. Dworkin (1987) reveals the highest levels of stress are related to salaries and

benefits, teaching load and student discipline outside of the classroom.

A final area to examine that is inherent in the profession is an unsafe work environment. Public schools in large urban cities where the teacher is threatened physically or verbally also contribute to the burnout rate. Hittner (1981) recognized the effects of violence, vandalism and illegal acts in schools on teachers after physical attacks or psychological abuse to teachers. Hittner asserts that the teacher's perception of this type of environment varies greatly but those affected most perceive this as a major reason for leaving the profession.

Intrinsic in Oneself

The second major category described by Jorde 91982) are those contributing causes intrinsic to the individual. The first being the teacher's own stress-tolerance level. As stated earlier, stress can yield both positive and negative effects. Alschuler (1980) remarks individuals need to find their own comfortable stress level. With an optimal level of stress, individuals can reach their most productive peak. The key is not to let stress become overwhelming. Hittner (1981) revealed a study regarding teacher's perception of stress in "Teachers in Stress." The study purported a schedule of recent events which can cause possible stressors in an individual's personal life which may affect their feelings and performance at work. Items can include but are not limited to: marriage, divorce, pregnancy, death of a loved one, change of residence, recreation, sleeping habits or eating habits. These reference points are used today

clinically today by social workers and therapists to assist individuals in identifying and dealing with items noted when possible.

The Holmes-Rahe Model which identifies reaction outcomes to stress events is also noted in which they are mediated by the individuals perception of the severity of a life even (Hittner, 1981). This study was an attempt to examine high stress and low stress individuals and assess specific variables that encourage either behavior. In general, it is thought that younger teacher are most susceptible to burnout, but in this study, age was not determined to be a predisposing factor. Hittner concluded that teachers that experience high stress levels believed their job was of great importance and they used leisure to assist in achieving sound coping skills (1981). The low stress level group felt they had increased control over their work and greater control of their personal life, but the difference was found in their coping techniques. The low stress group coped with their work environment by redirecting their priorities to leisure activities, while regarding school as being equally important to leisure time.

This study also illustrates the second contributing cause intrinsic to the individual which is coping and adaptation ability. It's been said that life of full of surprises and with this actuality, adjustments to change must occur in our lives. These adjustment can happen gradually over time or quickly without warning. Decisions are continuously being made both consciously and subconsciously by the nervous system. One must

consider the perception of such stressful events and not the intensity of the stressor. How one perceives stress can indicate the most critical step toward avoidance of an overwhelming and disoriented state. Being encouraged to simply "flop with the mop" does have some merit.

The Type A behavior pattern is a third intrinsic factor that may lead to burnout. Research in the 1970's exposed the workaholic: one with "excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience and harried sense of time urgency." (Jorde, 1982, p.39). It is important to note, burnout can result from a teacher being addicted to work which is not synonymous with a devotion to work. Finally, a stress-prone diet can contribute to burnout. A healthy lifestyle with good dietary intake can assist one in combating stress while other dietary selections such as caffeine, salt, excessive consumption of sugar or skipping meals can actually intensify stress (Buzzone, 1995).

Fundamental in our Society and Culture

Tensions and pressures of living in our ever changing society can also contribute to burnout. The computer generation, space travel, medical and multimedia advancements have all evolved rather quickly without offering much time to appreciate such evolutionary concepts. Time passes so quickly without allowing one time to reflect and think.

A second societal pressure that can contribute to burnout is "the myth of superwoman" (Jorde, 1982, p. 42). Unfortunately for some, spousal support is weak and guilt runs high. A final contributing cause identified with societal ties is the limited

"network of support systems" present. Support systems are vital in the prevention of burnout as was identified in a study by Hittner (1981). When examining job engagement and life satisfaction, Hittner points out that parents and/or significant others were more important to the teachers surveyed than organizational members. Other school colleagues and the use of leisure time in providing support mechanisms for stress also fared lower as well (1981). Family and friends often assist teachers in maintaining perspective and ways to achieve realistic resolution of problems. Without this supportive environment, formal support groups become critical.

Biological Response to Stress

Why do people say they hate surprise parties? Ever notice what happens inside your body when the telephone rings in the middle of the night? The answer to these questions may lie on the physiologic responses that take place as a result of the "fight or flight" mechanism that occurs during these times. It is know that the adrenal and pituitary glands secrete hormones to protect the body from injury while stimulating the body's protective reactions. Under a stressful situation it is typical for one to experience an increase in respiration rate and blood pressure, muscle tension and dilation of the pupils of the eye. Chronic or long term stress often leads to a variety of symptoms such as: migraine headache. low back pain, peptic ulcer, hypertension, gastrointestinal problems (Jorde, 1982). These symptoms associated with chronic stress were also noted in the study Hittner performed (1981).

Behavioral Changes with Stress

Alschuler (1980) reveals four psychological changes noted with excessive stress. The first being increased distance from students and colleagues. This can be observed as a teacher spending as little time as possible with pupils. Second, emotional and physical fatigue demonstrated by poor sleep, muscle tension and malaise (Dworkin, 1987). Third, an attitude shirt to the cynical as noted when teachers appear cold, irritable and hostile toward colleagues or students. This occurs when pressures mount and one is unable to cope effectively. A final behavior change that might be noted with creased stress is total disgust or "terminal burnout". This occurs when one turns to drug or alcohol abuse, depression and psychiatric breakdowns. Often these breakdowns are a result of prolonged stress producing increased anxiety, fear and depression. Finally, both the biological and psychological responses vary in severity and frequency in accordance to age, sex, and family history of the individual.

In 1985, Bradfield and Fones reported that as the level of stress increases so do the symptoms of physical illness. High stress teachers require more than three times as many sick days as low stress teachers. Hittner (1981) concurs as one increases stress, so will the potential for possible illness.

Characteristics of Teacher Burnout

Stated quite simply, burnout is characterized by exhaustion of physical or emotional strength resulting in physical, emotional and behavioral change (Reichley, 1995). Cedoline identifies burnout occurring in five different areas: physical,

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intellectual, social, psycho-emotional and spiritual (Dworkin, 1982). Symptoms demonstrating this are of a physical nature and might include insomnia, absenteeism, tardiness and chronic colds (Jorde, 1982). Tension headaches, neck strain, bruxism (grinding ones teeth together), sweating and accident proneness can also develop. Total fatigue in which one feels they can't spring back is common in burnout.

Intellectually teachers that experience burnout tend to experience role conflict and ambiguity and may be unclear regarding rights, duties and job responsibilities (Dworkin, 1987). A teacher may also question why they entered teaching. In agreement with Alschuler, Jorde (1982) claims teachers suffering from social burnout tend to display a growing cynicism, exhibited by increased insensitivity to children, parents, and the institution. Lombardi (1995), however, indicates teachers tend to worry too much about students when suffering from burnout. Psycho-emotional burnout may be illustrated by the teacher withdrawing emotionally, moodiness, paranoia, depression, sadness, poor concentration and an apathetic demeanor. This specific stage of burnout can result in increased tobacco, alcohol and/or drug use. Other teachers may find themselves over eating and even going on shopping sprees. Spiritual burnout is a final stage that can occur if intervention is not sought. Skills and knowledge remain intact, but the will to perform is gone. Often a teacher suffering from burnout may discourage new ideas with comments like "why knock yourself out" or "what are you trying to prove anyway?" Usually the physical symptoms occur

first and can even go unnoticed. Eventually, multiple areas are involved, but hopefully a positive coping technique is developed.

Coping Techniques

Hittner (1981) asserts there are four ways in which an individual can cope with stress. Ideally, one would accept the challenge of stressful circumstances and react with creativity and enthusiasm. Rosiland Forbes suggests these individuals be referred to as "stress seekers" (Alschuler, 1980). Stress seekers, according to Forbes, learn to direct their energies toward the job at hand. Such individuals are characterized by not being afraid to take risks, being motivated by challenges and of having a low tolerance for repetitious activities. Dr. Bruce Ogilvie of San Jose State University boasted, "stress seekers rank high in intelligence, emotional stability, ambitions and leadership" (Alschuler 1980).

Hittner's second method for coping with stress involves those individuals who put job related stress secondary in life (1981). These teachers meet minimum demands of the job, isolate themselves from their colleagues and often exhibit "psychological disengagement". These teachers according to Hittner are those that look forward to weekends, holidays, and often appear depressed, angered, fearful or lethargic toward their career (1981).

A third coping mechanism for teachers under too much stress is that of leaving the profession. Teachers who leave the profession might opt to find work in a related field, retire early or even retrain for another profession. Singer (1993)

studied special educators who left the profession and later returned to work after a minimum of one year away from the school system. She found 2,695 former special educators in Michigan and noted thirty-four percent of these returned to the classrooms and that fifty-eight percent of those instructors that returned remained in the field for at least five years.

The final coping strategy noted by Hittner is exemplified by those teachers failing to cope with the system. These teachers demonstrate somatic, psychosomatic and psychiatric dysfunction which eventually leads to disability, early retirement or worker's compensation benefits. While everyone endures stressors (events or conditions that cause stress) only the first method of coping discussed is truly appreciated by students, colleagues and administrators.

Strategies to Prevent Burnout

There are many methods one can choose to minimize excessive stress which can eventually lead to burnout. Alschuler (1980) advocates six burnout prevention strategies which include: prevent stress, reduce the stressors, change the perception of the stressors, manage one's physical state, improve one's coping abilities and counteract burnout. This brief overview will be incorporated into a more comprehensive list of possible solutions which will focus on what the individual can do as well as what the principal and school administration can do to help prevent teacher burnout.

Self-Assessment

Teachers must examine their work environment, personality and support systems. Self-assessment according to Swick & Hanley (1982) can assist in identifying one's areas of stress. In addition, one should educate themselves on stress and stress management techniques. These techniques need to be applicable to both the individual and to situations that arise within the profession. Alschuler (1980) asserts once one decides what their optimum stress level is, then one can capitalize on this balance between stress and productivity. Caution should be noted that one should not rely solely on any particular assessment instrument to measure burnout, however but only utilize them toward creating a clearer picture. Jorde (1982) suggests having a friend complete a survey for comparison of scores of any assessment instrument to the individual's own scores of one self, as "it is difficult to see the picture when you're inside the frame." (p. 22).

Reduce the Stress

Reduction of stressors is mandatory for effective coping for elimination of burnout. Teachers, like anyone else, can feel stressed before, during and after classroom hours. Playing background music in the faculty lounge or in an office is one of the most effective ways one can reduce stress during school hours, just as one might do when commuting to and from school. A relaxing sixty beats per minute can help relieve nervous tension. Wanko (1995) states "as you listen to the music, you pulse, normally seventy-six beats per minute, begins to drop to match the slower rate of the music." (p. 41).

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Research has identified sources of job-related stress. One area, transitional time can be reduced by utilizing this time for an additional purpose. Hunter (1971) disclosed several ways to minimize time when students are getting settled. Teachers might choose to ask the class to ponder a question, verbalize responses or begin taking notes as soon as the students enter the classroom. If this practice becomes routine, teachers will be able to avoid one small area for stress to build.

Other stressors can be listed, categorized and prioritized. Then a plan to reduce stress can be developed and implemented. In general, teachers need to learn to say "no" and delegate appropriate jobs to staff and students. Time management strategies are numerous and must be implemented. One technique is to employ students to decorate bulletin boards, tutor each other, take attendance, run errands around school and maintain cleanliness of the classroom.

Perception of Stress

"Often it is possible to alter the experience of stress by changing the perception of the situation" (Alschuler, 1980, p. 12). This can be accomplished by: setting more realistic goals, recognizing one's own limits, and by accepting what one cannot change. Alschuler recommends setting priorities and using the "80/20 Rule" where teachers can manage time more effectively. This rule implies, eighty percent of what is most valuable can be obtained by completing the top twenty percent of the tasks facing one. Teachers should examine their list of priorities and set up time frames in which to accomplish them. If obstacles arise,

attempts should be made to turn them into opportunities for creative solutions. By altering one's perception of stress, a more positive attitude can be induced (Bradfield & Fones, 1985). If an individual cannot improve their attitude from within, then they should look for another person or group that can help generate some positive goals. Research reveals burnout rates are lower for those professionals who actively express, analyze and share personal feelings (Bradfield & Fones, 1985).

Diet, Rest and Exercise

Proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest have been promoted since early childhood for most of us. As mentioned earlier, one needs to reduce caffeine, processed foods and sugars and eliminate fat consumption if one is to combat stress. Eating three balanced meals a day, getting enough sleep and limiting alcohol consumption can assist one in fighting stress (Bozzone, 1995). Bradfield and Fones promote a diet high in unrefined carbohydrate and fiber with increased nutrient content to combat stress (1985). Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle, and although some teachers do not work out regularly, making time for a short walk often during lunch period can help to reduce stress. Studies have proven that low-stress teachers exercise twice as hard as high-stress teachers (Reichley, 1995) and some teachers use exercise as a positive addiction. Both physical and mental activities can foster a positive addiction. Mental activities can include meditation, knitting and gardening, while physical activities can include running, swimming, weight lifting or playing a musical instrument. In either case, one can

build self-confidence, increase one's energy level and require less sleep.

Improving Coping Abilities

Understanding causes of stress will help one recognize the signals of stress and increase one's success in dealing with stress (Swick & Hanely, 1980). Relaxation is recommended by most authorities when attempting to combat stress. Bozzone (1995) remarks, if one regularly practices basic relaxation techniques to quiet one's mind, an individual will actually stay calmer under stress and avoid accumulating tension. She recommends a five minute relaxation break where one can perform simple exercises in the classroom or lounge. These exercises begin with deep breathing in conjunction with actively moving one's neck slowly in all directions, shrugging the shoulders up and down, forward and back, and finally, in circles forward and backward. The breathing is done by taking one breath in through the nose followed by filling the lungs upward. Wanko (1995) relates, "blood not properly oxygenated can contribute to depression, fatigue, and anxiety" (P. 41). The breath is then held for a few seconds and exhale slowly while pulling your abdomen in slightly. Relaxation techniques are numerous, but all bring the same physiologic changes, notably reduced blood pressure, heart rate and respiration. Studies have shown that yoga and meditation significantly lower stress (Bradfield & Fones, 1985). Meditation might take the form of self hypnosis, biofeedback and guided imagery.

Principal's Role in Prevention

Burnout is not just a problem for teachers. Principals and school administrators must concern themselves with this phenomena and find ways to prevent it. Hoversten (1992) suggests several methods a principal can try to attempt to inspire teachers such as: give positive feedback often, maintain high standards, encourage professional growth, formulate support groups, share decision making, and involve parents and community.

Positive Feedback

Blase and Kirby (1992) report research conducted found praise was the most frequently mentioned intervention to positively affect teachers work. Principals can give verbal, nonverbal or written feedback. Feedback can be in the form of a short note, a brief conversation or a pat on the back. School bulletins, district newsletters and faculty meetings are ideal forums to recognize dedicated faculty members. Principals need to be sincere, schedule time for teacher recognition, write brief personal notes to compliment faculty, target praise to teachers work and share positive feedback with the community.

Principals can compliment teachers on creative lesson plans, attractive classroom environments, good preparation for a substitute to easily follow and for sharing time or talents on committees. If positive feedback is given it can foster a positive sense of self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging. Teachers that are recognized by their supervisors often display an enhanced sense of loyalty and dedication. When teacher moral is positive it can be passed on to the students.

Hoversten (1992) contends, "small gestures of recognition are food for the soul." (p. 102).

Maintainence of High Standards

Principals traditionally believe in accountability, competence and professionalism; both principals and faculty must display these qualities. Assessment of the student-teacher ratio is critical as well as a principal's need to respect teaching time and decrease the number of interruptions. Hoversten (1992) remarks, "minutes lost become lost opportunities for learning" (p. 103).

Encourage Professional Growth

Principals should promote professional growth opportunities. Falks and Bolin (1987) reveal that staff development can provide opportunities for: networking, acquiring new skills, involving teachers in educational change and to increase the teacher's self-esteem. Lombardi (1995) advises teachers to challenge themselves to keep learning and to try new instructional strategies obtained from workshops as a method to bounce back from burnout. Teachers can attend conferences, workshops or observe unique programs. These opportunities can also focus on educational topics such as teacher burnout and stress. The more teachers know about the causes, consequences and prevention of stress, the less likely they are to suffer from it.

Formulate Support Systems

Principals need to acknowledge that stress is inevitable for teachers of any age teaching any grade. The principal and other faculty members need to formulate support teams to better assist

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teachers in need as not all teachers have adequate support at home. Alschuler's (1980) research reveals burnout rates are lower for those professionals who actively express, analyze and share personal feelings with colleagues. Principals can teach teachers how to recognize the signs of stress and burnout and the behavioral changes associated with it. Jorde (1982) exclaims, a part of the solution for principals and administrators is to "structure a work environment that nurtures people rather than consumes them". (p.18)

Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making provides opportunities to gain input from everyone involved at the building level. It allows for ownership of problems and solutions. Hoversten (1992) believes, if involvement is broadened, optimism and hope rise and energy and enthusiasm increase. Shared decision making can be instituted in a variety of areas including: developing of a public relations plan for parents and the community, needs assessment, discipline policy and code of behavior. Jorde (1982) points out that this process yields a clearer understanding of institutional goals, increased productivity, worker satisfaction and a more positive attitude. Edwards (1995) points out a success story utilizing shared decision making. Shared decision making was implemented in a Virginia school district in place of the traditional teacher performance evaluation. A Performance Growth Plan was developed by the principal, faculty and administration to allow teachers a voice in selecting a method for evaluation while providing an opportunity for the teachers to select a plan they felt would

stimulate their personality best. Plans included traditional mentoring as well as opportunities for collegial partnerships and individualized growth. Results after one year of implementation revealed teachers did benefit from their self-improvement choices.

Parent and Community Involvement

Principals need to invite parents and the community to become partners in education. Teachers need support from parents, school administrators, school boards and civic, business, religious and professional societies (Alschuler, 1980). Local businesses and parents can provide an external stimulus to the teacher and the classroom. Jorde (1992) exclaims one should "extend the classroom walls into a larger educational arena" (p. 261). These volunteers can share valuable time and expertise with the youth of today. Mentoring programs have successfully been implemented and can provide and increase in enthusiasm and community support. Parents can assist children in homework, class projects and field trips, and participate with other community members on advisory groups and decision making.

Conclusion

Would Mrs. Smith be teaching today had she known more about stress and ways to prevent excessive stress from mounting? A few stress management techniques might have diminished her mounting paper work. In addition, learning how to better handle stress when it comes along, as well as how to make changes in one's lifestyle to better cope. A knowledgeable principal and a respectful support system at school might have helped as well.

Principals can do a lot to foster enthusiasm and retard above average teacher turnover rates by giving positive comments often, involving parents, the community and themselves. They simply need to be willing to take the time and show teachers how valuable they are to students, school and community.

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